

THE 12TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT REPORT

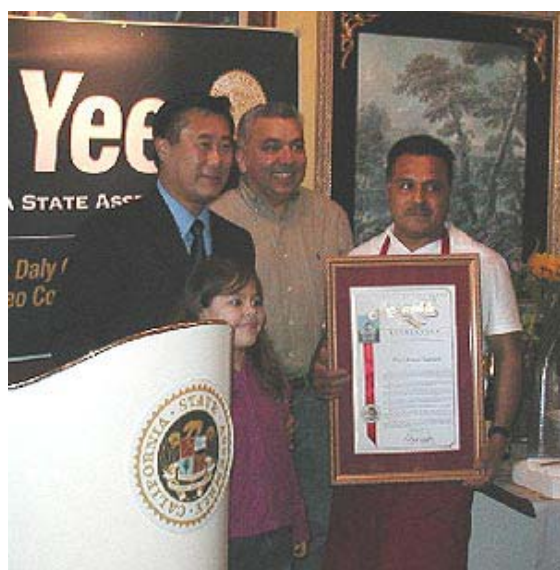


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YEE HONORS LISA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT WITH 12TH AD SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD



DALY CITY RESTAURANT OWNERS OVERCOME ANTI-IMMIGRANT, ANTI-GAY BIAS IN FULFILLING AMERICAN DREAM

Speaker pro Tem Yee recently honored Lisa's Mexican Restaurant in Daly City with the 12th Assembly District Small Business of the Year Award.

"Lisa's restaurant has been an exemplary small business

continued on page 2

YEE ANNOUNCES BILL REQUIRING MEETINGS ON UC EXECUTIVES PAY BE MADE PUBLIC

LEGISLATION WOULD REQUIRE ALL DISCUSSIONS ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION TO BE DONE IN OPEN MEETINGS

Recent audits, a lawsuit and other revelations that found that the University of California failed to get public approval from the Board of Regents for compensation packages and that some top executives were paid more than what was released to the public, spurred Speaker pro Tem Yee to introduce legislation requiring public meetings for all discussions regarding executive compensation at UC.

"For too long the UC has been acting in secrecy when it comes to determining high-level salaries," said Yee. "This legislation will finally bring sunshine to these discussions, give members of the media the democratic access they deserve, and restore the public's trust. The UC Regents talk the talk about transparency, this bill will make sure they walk the walk."

"UC's top management has been acting as if the university is a privately held company and it can spend money as it sees fit and make compensation decisions behind closed doors, with occasional rubber-stamp approval from the Regents," said Karl Olson, a lawyer for the San Francisco Chronicle. "But UC is a public trust, and its actions have to be taken openly." [Chronicle, 5/12/06].

UC has been holding closed committee meetings to discuss and act upon top executives' compensation. This bill would clarify that both Regents' committees and the full Board of Regents must meet openly when considering and acting upon top executives' compensation

Specifically, "discussion and actions on executive compensation proposals involving the President/chancellor, Chancellors/campus presidents, Vice Presidents of Agriculture, Administration, Academic Affairs, Budget, Health, Business Affairs, and Human Resources; Treasurer; Assistant Treasurer; General Counsel; and Regents' Secretary shall occur in open session of the appropriate committee of the Regents of the University of California, with final action occurring in open session of the full Board of Regents."

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | Assembly passes Yee bill to increase renewable energy |
| 3 | Assembly passes legislation to increase mental health services
Join the Keep It Clean campaign
White Ribbon Campaign continues to Grow |
| 4 | In the news: Make salary decisions about UC brass public |

continued from page 1

serving the Daly City and San Francisco communities,” said Speaker pro Tem Yee. “For over 38 years, Lisa’s has demonstrated a strong commitment to the youth in Daly City and San Francisco.”

“Guillermo Pinzon and Mario Santacruz, owners of Lisa’s, have dedicated countless resources and volunteer hours to support a broad range of causes on the Peninsula,” said Yee. “As immigrants and openly gay business owners, Guillermo and Mario have overcome significant discrimination to fulfill the American Dream.”

Lisa’s owners regularly donate food and support to numerous community activities, including annually supporting the fundraising efforts of the San Francisco Mission Dolores Church, catering services for several Daly City and Broadmoor district sponsored events, and by employing the youth of Daly City.

Pinzon and Santacruz have quite a story in their path to citizenship as well.

According the San Mateo County Times, Santacruz came 23 years ago to attend San Francisco State University and earn a master's degree in public administration, which he couldn't get in El Salvador. Pinzon fled El Salvador’s civil war in 1983. Having come from a mostly Catholic country with no openly gay culture, Pinzon got married and had a daughter, now 22. He met Santacruz, who taught him English. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan granted amnesty to almost 3 million undocumented immigrants, giving Pinzon a chance to apply for citizenship.

“Their story is amazing and should be appreciated by everyone,” said Yee. “I am so proud to stand with Guillermo and Maria as we fight for equal rights and dignity for all, especially our immigrant and gay communities.”

“Small businesses employ more people and add more to our economy than any sector. In fact, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are over one million small businesses in California,” said Speaker pro Tem Yee, “Small businesses, like Lisa’s Mexican Restaurant, are the backbone of California’s economy.”

Yee also honored Joe Leland café of Visitacion Valley and owner Russel Morine with the San Francisco edition of the Small Business of the Year.



ASSEMBLY PASSES YEE BILL TO INCREASE RENEWABLE ENERGY



AB 1969 INCREASES ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY ENERGY AT STATE'S WATER AND WASTEWATER AGENCIES

On a bipartisan 56-8 vote, the California State Assembly recently approved legislation designed to increase the production of renewable energy in California. AB 1969, authored by Speaker pro Tem Yee, will allow water and wastewater agencies to sell environmentally-friendly energy – such as small hydro, solar, and biogas – produced by their treatment and delivery facilities to electrical companies, resulting in up to 250 new megawatts of energy into the state’s grid.

“This bill will significantly help the state meet our renewable energy goals and improve the environment through a reduction in greenhouse gases,” said Yee. “Currently, hydroelectric energy is being wasted at small and medium sized water agencies simply because the law doesn’t allow them the opportunity to capture that resource. AB 1969 will remove obstacles to such production and encourage the full potential of renewable energy generation by the state’s water and wastewater agencies.”

Specifically, AB 1969 will require electrical corporations to create standard contracts for the purchase of qualifying renewable energy from public water and wastewater agencies. The legislation will provide new renewable energy generation resources that otherwise would not be developed; help electrical companies meet their Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) goals and resource adequacy requirements (twenty percent by 2010); improve the environment through a reduction in greenhouse gases; and offset rising energy demand and increasing water treatment and delivery costs.

“California has a promising opportunity to increase energy production while also helping our environment,” said Yee. “As the demand for water and energy grows, it is imperative that water agencies be able to offset their increased needs through the sale of energy being generated at their plants, which will also result in significant savings for residents.”

The rising cost of energy directly impacts consumers, both for their own energy consumption and for their water and wastewater service, which is greatly impacted by the price of energy. The state’s water infrastructure currently accounts for nearly twenty percent of the overall electrical consumption. Under

AB 1969, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) will determine the price of sold energy based on the market rate for renewable power.



ASSEMBLY PASSES LEGISLATION TO INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

On a 42-21 vote, the California State Assembly recently approved legislation that will expand a state program designed to increase the number of mental health professionals in underserved communities. AB 1852, authored by Speaker pro Tem Yee, will increase the number of mental health professionals eligible for educational loan forgiveness under the Licensed Mental Health Provider Education Program and the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund, both established by legislation authored by Yee in 2004.

The 2004 legislation (AB 938) which created the program allows any licensed mental health service provider such as a psychologist, marriage family therapist (MFT), or licensed clinical social worker, who provides direct patient care in a publicly funded facility or a mental health professional shortage area, to apply for grants to reimburse his or her educational loans related to a career as a licensed mental health service provider.

Because many of these professionals must first work as an intern to earn licensure, and therefore may not have the ability to immediately pay back such loans, AB 1852 expands the program to include MFT and associate clinical social worker interns. The program also requires the individual to serve for a minimum of two years.

"We created this program to assist those who want to serve in areas of greatest need," said Yee. "AB 1852 will appropriately expand this program to help more individuals who want to pursue a career in mental healthcare and assist those in underserved communities. It is expected that the effectiveness of this program will increase tremendously."

In 2001, the California Mental Health Planning Council created the Human Resources Project which convened focus groups targeting social workers from three of the most underserved ethnic communities – Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, and African American. The most often cited barrier facing those wanting to practice were financial problems, specifically meeting the expenses of graduate school as they were also struggling with living and child care expenses. As a result, Assemblyman Yee, who is also a child psychologist, introduced AB 938 creating a loan forgiveness program similar to what was already available for doctors and nurses.

"As a child psychologist, I understand the difficulties many such professionals face as they graduate, especially those who want to serve our most vulnerable populations," said Yee. "This legislation will allow more California communities to have the mental health services they need and deserve."



continued from page 1

In November 2005, it was reported that the university paid some top employees more than what was reported to the public. Over the past few months, audits also found that the university failed to even get approval from the Regents for a number of compensation packages. In fact, The Chronicle reported that university auditors found that 143 exceptions to UC's compensation policies were made to give extra pay or benefits to 113 senior managers. In addition, Pricewaterhouse Coopers auditors found 91 additional exceptions last month for a different group of UC executives. And last week, The Chronicle filed a lawsuit in an attempt to gain access to a Regents meeting regarding compensation.

"Assemblyman Yee's bill is not about whether top UC employees are over or under compensated," said Tom Newton, General Counsel of the California Newspaper Publishers Association, which is sponsoring the bill. "It's about restoring the confidence of the taxpayers, the public and the Legislature by making sure UC pay policies can survive and even flourish in full sunshine."

"Unfortunately, an extraordinary number of compensation packages have been approved in secret and in complete violation of UC policy, without any input from taxpayers or students," said Yee. "It is imperative that we enact this open government law immediately."

Yee plans to use Assembly Bill 775 as the vehicle for this legislation. AB 775, which had to do with the use of children as medical interpreters, is no longer necessary because the Department of Managed Health Care is implementing regulations to address the issue. AB 775 will soon be considered in the State Senate.

Assemblyman Yee has always advocated for transparency in government. In 1999, he was one of only two San Francisco Supervisors to publicly support Proposition G, the Sunshine Ordinance Amendment, which made major improvements to the city's open-government laws and created for the first time an effective way to ensure compliance by government officials. This year, Yee is also authoring AB 2581 to ensure free speech for college publications, specifically prohibiting censorship of student newspapers at any UC, CSU, or community college.



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May 29, 2006

The Mercury News

Monday

EDITORIAL

Make salary decisions about UC brass public

S.F. LAWMAKER'S BILL SHOULD BE FAST-TRACKED, SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

The executive-pay scandals that have rocked the University of California have exposed a culture of greed, excess and secrecy at the top echelons of the nation's premier public university system. Top officials granted lavish perks willy-nilly behind closed doors to senior managers with little regard for the public interest or taxpayers' dollars.

The best way to put an end to the excesses -- and begin restoring accountability and trust -- is to bring compensation decisions for top officials out of the shadows and into the public sphere. AB 775, a bill introduced this week by Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, will do just that. Lawmakers should put it on the fast track to Gov. Schwarzenegger's desk.



The bill would require the UC board of regents to meet in public when considering the compensation of top-ranking university officials. That would put the University of California in line with most other public agencies, which are required by California open-meeting laws to hold discussions over pay in public. Importantly, it would force the regents not only to have clear policies and

procedures for approving compensation but also to follow them.

Ground zero of the UC pay scandal was the office of President Robert Dynes and of his predecessor, Richard Atkinson. An audit found 143 exceptions to compensation policies were approved to grant senior officials additional pay and perks. They've included a relocation allowance of \$125,000 for one official to move from Santa Cruz to Oakland and scores of other extravagant giveaways.

Meanwhile, the full board of regents often rubber-stamped compensation decisions with little public discussion. That's in part because the regents insist that only full board meetings are required to be held in public -- not special committee meetings where the real discussions over pay, and policies, take place.

The University of California needs to be able to compete aggressively for top talent, whether they are faculty or administrators. That often means paying top dollar and granting generous perks to deserving candidates. But it cannot mean secret deals that treat the university as a private piggy bank to reward greed in violation of the public trust.

